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It takes a lot of chutzpa to give that kind of lie to Members of Congress. Asking for proof, the three Congressmen being briefed were told the charges were documented in the reports of the investigative officers. The Department of Homeland Security promised to provide these reports as proof that Ramos and Compean actually intended to go out that day and kill a Mexican.

The proof, of course, never came. The Congressmen kept asking. The calls weren't returned. It is called stonewalling. The DHS stonewalled for 5 months.

Members asked for copies of the completed report of investigation, which should have backed up these alleged facts that were being told to the Members of Congress during their September 26 briefing. Months passed, and nothing from the Department of Homeland Security. After several letters and public pressure, the Department of Homeland Security finally releases a redacted version of the official report in February 2007. Surprise, surprise, the alleged confessions by Ramos and Compean were not to be found. The documentation for the charge that they had brazenly proclaimed their intent to kill a Mexican was not there. How could this be?

The Department of Homeland Security officials had assured Members that it was a solid prosecution and they were guilty, that they wanted to shoot a Mexican. But these were flat out lies told to Members of Congress.

During a DHS Subcommittee hearing on February 6, 2007, DHS Inspector General Richard Skinner was questioned by Congressman CULBERSON about this issue. Under oath, Mr. Skinner acknowledged the information given to the Texas Congressman was in fact false, but smugly justified this blatant and willful lying by calling it "a mischaracterization, unfortunately repeated at the briefing." No, Mr. Skinner, it wasn't a mischaracterization. It was a lie, no matter how colorful the euphemism. Ollie North was prosecuted for far less an egregious act. Ollie had given some misinformation to congressional staffers who were not even part of an official briefing to Congress.

To this day, absolutely nothing has been done about this crime, the crime of lying to Congress. Administration officials deliberately misled Members of Congress in order to discourage them from pursuing the Ramos and Compean case, and no one has been held accountable for it.

U.S. Attorney Johnny Sutton himself was publicly labeling these two brave men who risked their lives for us as corrupt. Johnny Sutton lives behind a gated community. Johnny Sutton, who has no track record of experience and service to his country as these two men who put their lives on the line for us every day, yet Sutton dishonestly claimed them to be corrupt. He also

felt compelled to expose one of the men who had a family altercation a few years before that had nothing to do with his job; yet Mr. Sutton had to expose that family altercation of one of these, Ramos and Compean, to the public.

Well, Ramos and Compean is a case that stank from day one, and that stench is coming straight from the White House. The President, instead of looking into this matter, has dug in his heels, permitting his appointees to slander these two agents.

I would suggest that what we see in Ramos and Compean and the other issues that I brought up tonight demonstrate a pattern that is unacceptable. The American people should understand the attitude that is going on here in Washington. We should look closely, and we should demand a higher standard from this administration.

Even worse, the President has personally made decisions that have resulted in these two agents languishing in solitary confinement. Again, to say this is a mean-spirited vindictive prosecutor is to put it mildly. Importantly, President Bush is backing this malicious and unjustified prosecution to the hilt.

This case demonstrates why hearings are an integral part of the checks and balances system. It is in this venue that the Executive Branch is held accountable for their actions, under oath. It was only when an Administration official was under oath that the lies about Ramos and Compean were admitted. But this Administration has decided to thumb its nose at that obligation to make its case under oath at a public hearing.

Chairman WILLIAM DELAHUNT graciously approved my request to hold hearings on the Ramos and Compean case. In doing so, an official Subcommittee investigation into the case in preparation for the hearing was authorized.

During the course of this investigation, the resistance from the Departments of Justice, Homeland Security and State was consistent with the arrogance and obfuscation that flows through this Administration from the top down. Our hearing had to be postponed for months because of the Administration's refusal to provide requested documents or to send the necessary witnesses to testify before the Subcommittee, citing the Committee did not have proper jurisdiction. Therefore, U.S. Attorney Johnny Sutton, DHS Inspector General Richard Skinner or any of his investigators refused to appear. That decision was, clearly, made in the White House.

Our government provided a flawed immunity agreement, free health care, and unconditional border crossing cards to an illegal alien criminal in exchange for testimony that sent border patrol agents Ramos and Compean to prison.

Our government kept secrets from the jury that the drug dealer intercepted by Ramos and Compean had hauled another shipment of drugs across our border, this, while on a government issued border cross pass. Clearly, this is well within the jurisdiction of an oversight committee responsible for overseeing relations with other countries, including Mexico, including international drug smuggling. Clearly, the public has a right to know about these things. This Administration apparently believes there is no obligation to answer questions in

public and under oath about actions and policies of the Administration. It's a travesty.

How bad is it? In preparation for the Ramos and Compean hearing, we made request after request, countless phone calls and even a FOIA lawsuit by the watchdog group, Judicial Watch, and the Administration still refused to release copies of the border crossing cards issued to the drug smuggler in this case, claiming the smuggler is protected under the "Privacy Act." I was instructed by the Justice Department to obtain a privacy waiver in order for that information to be released. A privacy waiver from an illegal alien criminal? This absurd contention is just another example of a condescending and dismissive attitude. Such obstructionism, however, is the rule, not the exception with this Administration.

By the way, due only to a bureaucratic fluke we finally obtained those border crossing cards. Our repeated requests for documents were taken so nonchalantly that I actually received an official response letter from the Department of Justice, dated March 16, 2007, addressed to "Congresswoman ROHR-ABACHER." That was just one of several insulting form letters sent in response to Member letters regarding the Ramos and Compean case.

Plea after plea from Members of Congress, for the President to intervene on behalf of Ramos and Compean by either pardoning or commuting their sentences, have been ignored. Last year, I personally reached out to the President to take the pressure and confrontation out of this issue. I suggested that the President direct the Justice Department to request that Ramos and Compean be permitted to remain free on bond, pending their appeal. Even common criminals get that kind of leeway. What was the response? A White House press release was issued the next day, proclaiming that the Administration opposed letting Ramos and Compean out pending appeal and that no special consideration would be granted to anyone, much less these two border patrol agents, sounds righteous—a position of not making any exceptions. Except, of course, for the fact that a short time later, White House aide Scooter Libby, had his sentence commuted by the President in a heartbeat. For the record, I believe it was proper to commute Scooter Libby's sentence. He got a raw deal. Unfortunately, this incident suggests that only the members of the President's clique gets such consideration. Of course, in the meantime, the President has pardoned or commuted the sentences of dozens of convicted criminals, including drug dealers.

It is truly with a heavy heart Mr. Speaker, that I stand here reciting example after example of the maliciousness and condescending attitude exhibited by this Administration. It is a problem flowing from the top.

When I hear my friends on the other side of the aisle accusing this Administration of stonewalling, of cover-ups, or of thwarting investigations, I sadly must concur with them. This White House exemplifies needless hostility, turf jealousy and obstructionism. The American people should know it, and should know that this charge comes not from a partisan Democrat, but from a lifetime conservative Republican.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. TANNER (at the request of Mr. HOYER) for today.

Mr. ORTIZ (at the request of Mr. HOYER) for today on account of business in the district.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas (at the request of Mr. HOYER) for today.

Mr. CONYERS (at the request of Mr. HOYER) for today.

Ms. WOOLSEY (at the request of Mr. HOYER) for today and the balance of the week on account of medical reasons.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas (at the request of Mr. HOYER) for today and the balance of the week on account of constituent obligations.

Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida (at the request of Mr. BOEHNER) for today and the balance of the week on account of a family medical emergency.

Mr. SESSIONS (at the request of Mr. BOEHNER) for today on account of official business.

Mr. KELLER of Florida (at the request of Mr. BOEHNER) for today and the balance of the week on account of the birth of his daughter, Kate Elizabeth Keller, born on March 3, 2008.

Mr. GINGREY (at the request of Mr. BOEHNER) for today on account of flight delays due to inclement weather.

SPECIAL ORDERS GRANTED

By unanimous consent, permission to address the House, following the legislative program and any special orders heretofore entered, was granted to:

(The following Members (at the request of Ms. KAPTUR) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. DEFAZIO, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. KAPTUR, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. MAHONEY of Florida, for 5 minutes, today.

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. JONES of North Carolina) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. POE, for 5 minutes, March 10 and 11.

Mr. FRANKS of Arizona, for 5 minutes, March 6 and 10.

Mr. BURTON of Indiana, for 5 minutes, today, March 5 and 6.

Mr. TIAHRT, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. JONES of North Carolina, for 5 minutes, today, March 5, 6, 10 and 11.

Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey, for 5 minutes, March 6.

Mr. MORAN of Kansas, for 5 minutes, March 5.

Mr. BURGESS, for 5 minutes, March 6.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Madam Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 9 o'clock and 4 minutes p.m.), the House adjourned until tomorrow, Wednesday, March 5, 2008, at 10 a.m.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 8 of rule XII, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

5602. A letter from the Chief, Policy Division, PSHSB, Federal Communications Commission, transmitting the Commission's final rule — In the Matter of Wireless E911 Location Accuracy Requirements Revision of the Commission's Rules to Ensure Compatibility with Enhanced 911 Emergency Calling Systems Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials-International, Inc. Request for Declaratory Ruling 911 Requirements for IP-Enabled Service Providers [PS Docket No. 07-114 CC Docket No. 94-102 WC Docket No. 05-196] received February 5, 2008, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

5603. A letter from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting a copy of D.C. ACT 17-292, "Commission on Fashion Arts and Events Establishment Act of 2008," pursuant to D.C. Code section 1-233(c)(1); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

5604. A letter from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting a copy of D.C. ACT 17-313, "Emergency Medical Services Improvement Amendment Act of 2008," pursuant to D.C. Code section 1-233(c)(1); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

5605. A letter from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting a copy of D.C. ACT 17-312, "Evictions with Dignity Amendment Act of 2008," pursuant to D.C. Code section 1-233(c)(1); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

5606. A letter from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting a copy of D.C. ACT 17-293, "Park East Assistance Act of 2008," pursuant to D.C. Code section 1-233(c)(1); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

5607. A letter from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting a copy of D.C. ACT 17-294, "Choice in Drug Treatment Temporary Amendment Act of 2008," pursuant to D.C. Code section 1-233(c)(1); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

5608. A letter from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting a copy of D.C. ACT 17-310, "New Convention Center Hotel Omnibus Financing and Development Amendment Act of 2008," pursuant to D.C. Code section 1-233(c)(1); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

5609. A letter from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting a copy of D.C. ACT 17-295, "Burned Fire Fighter Relief Temporary Amendment Act of 2008," pursuant to D.C. Code section 1-233(c)(1); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

5610. A letter from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting a copy of D.C. ACT 17-311, "Uniform Anatomical Gift Revision Act of 2008," pursuant to D.C. Code section 1-233(c)(1); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

5611. A letter from the Deputy Assistant Administrator For Regulatory Programs, NMFS, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule — Fisheries of the Caribbean, Gulf of Mexico, and South Atlantic; Reef Fish Fishery and Shrimp Fishery of the Gulf of Mexico; Amendment 27/14 [Docket No. 0612243157-7799-07] (RIN: 0648-AT87) received February 14, 2008, pursuant to 5 U.S.C.

801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

5612. A letter from the Program Manager, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting the Department's final rule — Chafee National Youth in Transition Database (RIN: 0970-AC21) received February 26, 2008, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

5613. A letter from the Chief, Publications and Regulations, Internal Revenue Service, transmitting the Service's final rule — 26 CFR 1.1361: Special Rule for Bank Required to Change from the Reserve Method of Accounting on Becoming an S Corporation (Rev. Proc. 2008-18) received February 26, 2008, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES ON PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XIII, reports of committees were delivered to the Clerk for printing and reference to the proper calendar, as follows:

Mr. DINGELL: Committee on Energy and Commerce. H.R. 1424. A bill to amend section 712 of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974, section 2705 of the Public Health Service Act, and section 9812 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to require equity in the provision of mental health and substance-related disorder benefits under group health plans; with an amendment (Rept. 110-374 Pt. 3). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union.

Mr. BERMAN: Committee on Foreign Affairs. H.R. 1084. A bill to amend the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, the State Department Basic Authorities Act of 1956, and the Foreign Service Act of 1980 to build operational readiness in civilian agencies, and for other purposes; with an amendment (Rept. 110-537). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union.

Ms. CASTOR: Committee on Rules. House Resolution 1014. Resolution providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 1424) to amend section 712 of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974, section 2705 of the Public Health Service Act, and section 9812 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to require equity in the provision of mental health and substance-related disorder benefits under group health plans (Rept. 110-538). Referred to the House Calendar.

Ms. MATSUI: Committee on Rules. House Resolution 1015. Resolution providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 2857) to reauthorize and reform the national service laws (Rept. 110-539). Referred to the House Calendar.

PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XII, public bills and resolutions were introduced and severally referred, as follows:

By Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California (for himself and Mr. BARROW):

H.R. 5522. A bill to require the Secretary of Labor to issue interim and final occupational safety and health standards regarding worker exposure to combustible dust, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Education and Labor.

By Mr. McDERMOTT:

H.R. 5523. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to regulate and tax Internet gambling; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. YARMUTH (for himself, Mrs. BIGGERT, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr.